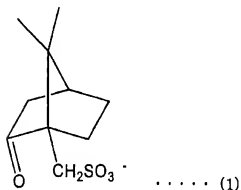


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A negative resist composition comprising at least an alkali-soluble resin, a cross-linking agent which is cross-linked with the alkali-soluble resin by the action of an acid, and an onium salt as a photoacid generator, in which the anion component of the onium salt is at least a sulfonate having a polycyclic structure,

wherein the anion component of the onium salt is a sulfonate represented by the following general formula (1)



and wherein the cation component of the onium salt is an iodonium salt.

2. The negative resist composition according to claim 1 further comprising an acidic compound and/or a basic compound.

3. The negative resist composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the polycyclic structure is at least one selected from a group consisting of adamantane, tricyclodecane, tetracyclodecane, isobornyl, norbornane, adamantane alcohol, norbornane lactone, and derivatives thereof.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Cancelled)

6. A method for forming a resist pattern comprising the steps of: forming at least a photoresist layer on a substrate using the negative resist composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, and forming the desired photoresist pattern by applying exposure and development processes to the photoresist layer.

7. The negative resist composition according to claim 2, wherein the polycyclic structure is at least one selected from a group consisting of adamantane, tricyclodecane, tetracyclodecane, isobornyl, norbornane, adamantane alcohol, norbornane lactone, and derivatives thereof.